

# *This week in the Legislature*

*An update from State Senator Robert Garton*



INDIANAPOLIS – Two short words spoken boldly on Sept. 11 by a young family man from New Jersey aboard United Airlines flight 93 have become, as President Bush said last week in his "State of the Union" address, a new American creed.

"Let's roll," declared Todd Beamer to his fellow passengers who refused to sit by idly while terrorists redirected flight 93 toward our national landmarks and national leaders in Washington, D.C. Beamer and the others who sacrificed their lives by bursting into the Boeing 757's cockpit that Tuesday morning are no less American heroes than the soldiers who marched into death across the fields of Gettysburg, stormed the beaches of Normandy and stared down the enemy in the swamps of Vietnam.

The aftershocks of that day still reverberate across the country, affecting every school, church, city hall and other public meeting place. Rather than reacting in fear and trepidation, however, Americans responded with an outpouring of concern and compassion for their neighbors. Each of us wants to do whatever we can to make life a little better in our homes, communities and country.

In the Indiana Senate, several proposals arising from 9-11 have been passed or are moving forward. Here is a brief overview of the measures:

Senate Bill 25 waives tuition and fees at Indiana's public colleges and universities for children of Armed Forces veterans who serve during the war on terror and who suffer a service-connected death or disability.

Senate Bill 45 increases the penalty for a person who falsely reports a bomb threat, consumer product tampering threat, or threat that a weapon of mass destruction has been placed in a building or place of assembly. According to local law enforcement officials, the number of false threats rose considerably after Sept. 11.

Senate Bill 50 excludes from state taxes money paid to surviving spouses, children or estates as compensation for an individual's death in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Senate Bill 89 calls for the official motto of the United States, "In God We Trust," to be displayed in every public school classroom.

Senate Bill 213 permits an emergency medical technician (EMT) to administer epinephrine to a person experiencing an allergic reaction. EMTs currently are forbidden from administering the medication, even though there is no such prohibition for persons who have no medical training. Epinephrine shots could help save lives in the event of a biological or chemical attack, and also in isolated cases of allergic reaction or anaphylaxis.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 3 "strongly encourages" all public schools in Indiana to teach the Pledge of Allegiance to their students and to conduct Pledge ceremonies regularly.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 4 commends employers whose employees have been called to service in the National Guard and reserve units of the U.S. Armed Forces for supporting their employees and urging employers who have employees called up in the future to support those men and women "to the extent and in the most generous manner possible."

Beyond the discussion of issues relating to terrorism, September 11 has had an affect on the Indiana Senate. Debate on contentious issues has been more civil despite philosophical differences. There seems to be greater respect for individuals. People appear to have re-evaluated priorities.

As President Bush said Jan. 29 in his address to the nation, "Yet after America was attacked, it was as if our entire country looked into a mirror and saw our better selves."

In many ways, the content of issues under consideration at the Statehouse and the tenor of debate reflect a renewed spirit of civility. This is our small contribution to the new American creed: "Let's roll!"

